

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): ~~Tensionless~~ A tensionless leveller (1) ~~intended~~ for levelling a metal strip ~~[(5),]~~ and having an entry and an exit, comprising:

n+1 motorized rolls each having a constant radius R; (4,4'), of the type comprising two superposed cassettes (2, 3) each

a lower superposed cassette supporting at least n/2 of the rolls; and

(4, 4') of constant radius R, an upper superposed cassette supporting at least n/2 of the rolls not supported by the lower superposed cassette; wherein

the rolls are offset with respect to one another and are placed alternately above and below ~~[[the]]~~ a path of the strip ~~[(5)],~~

~~[[the]]~~ an axis of each of the rolls (4, 4') of one of the lower or the upper cassette (2, 3) being separated from ~~[[the]]~~ an axis of ~~[[the]]~~ an immediately successive roll (4,4') of the other of the lower or the upper cassette by a ~~centre-to-centre~~ center-to-center spacing  $E_k$ , in which:

for k from 2 to 4,  $R/E_k = R/E_1$ ;

for k from n-3 to n,  $R/E_k = R/E_n$  and  $R/E_n < R/E_1$ ; and

for k from 5 to n-1,  $R/E_n \leq R/E_k \leq R/E_1$ , and  ~~$R/E_k \leq R/E_{k+1}$~~   $R/E_k \geq R/E_{k+1}$ ,

a center-to-center spacing between a first roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller and a second roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller being  $E_1$ , and

a center-to-center spacing between a last roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller and a next to last roll of the rolls from the entry of the leveller being  $E_n$

~~said leveller (1) optionally including means for adjusting the centre-to-centre spacings  $E_k$ .~~

2. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to claim 1, in which  $n \geq 8$ .

3. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to ~~either of claims 1 and 2, in which claim 1, wherein~~, when ~~[[the]]~~ a thickness of the strip ~~[[ (5) ]]~~ to be levelled is between 0.5 and 3 mm,  $14 \leq n \leq 22$ .

4. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to ~~either of claims 1 and 2, in which claim 1, wherein~~, when ~~[[the]]~~ a thickness of the strip ~~[[ (5) ]]~~ is between 3 and 15 mm,  $10 \leq n \leq 16$ .

5. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein~~:

for k from 1 to x,  $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$ ; and

for k from x+1 to n,  $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$ .

6. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein~~:

for k from 1 to x,  $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$ ;

for one of the ~~centre-to-centre~~ center-to-center spacings  $E_x$ , where  $5 \leq x \leq n-4$ , ~~being such that:~~  $0.80 \leq R/E_x \leq 0.90$ ; and

for k from x+1 to n,  $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$ .

7. (Currently Amended): ~~Leveller (1)~~ The leveller according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4, in which claim 1, wherein~~:

for k from 1 to x,  $0.90 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.95$ ;

for one of the ~~centre-to-centre~~ center-to-center spacings  $E_x$ , where  $5 \leq x \leq n-4$ , being ~~such that:~~  $0.80 \leq R/E_x \leq 0.90$ , and  $0.75 \leq R/E_{x+1} \leq 0.85$ ; and

for  $k$  from  $x+2$  to  $n$ ,  $0.70 \leq R/E_k \leq 0.80$ .

8. (Currently Amended): ~~Method for~~ A method of levelling a metal strip  $[(5)]$  in which a leveller  $[(1)]$  according to any one of claims 1 to 7 is used, ~~leveller in which the~~ wherein a degree of plastic deformation applied by the leveller is at least 60% and at most 90%.

9. (Currently Amended): ~~Levelling~~ The levelling method according to claim 8, ~~in which~~ wherein the metal strip  $[(5)]$  is a steel strip.